

Ultimately, the results of an environmental balance offer the opportunity to render **in-company discussions** as well as **external discussions** more objectively. This is also important in the context of the identification with the company mentioned at the beginning.

In summary, the following concrete starting-points can be identified for the participation of workers and works councils in the critical review process:

- Assessment and evaluation of a balance depend on their objective. Criteria important from the works councils' point of view, such as the field of health and safety standards at work, must be taken into consideration even in the definition of objectives. Within the critical review process, they have the opportunity of introducing their interests in favour of the company and of the staff early on.
- Changes in the company's own production process have an impact on suppliers and customers. Involvement of works councils in the execution of environmental balances allows for a better understanding of the interdependencies and problems related to upstream and to downstream production phases, opening new opportunities for co-operation with the works councils of the companies affected.
- The collection of in-company data required for environmental balances is improved where the workers' know-how is used. Due to their practical experience, works councils are often in a better position than are others to recognise the mistakes made with 'performance criteria' or the utilisation of data sources. Their participation in the critical review process

is therefore very valuable in that they contribute to ensuring validity of the environmental balance results, hence rendering the high economic effort involved in making environmental balances sensible.

3 Conclusion

What's necessary for this purpose is an appropriate qualification of the workers' representatives. The foundations for this are offered by a project promoted by the Foundation on Work and Environment and sponsored by the Federal Environmental Agency, and whose aim it is, among other things, to obtain workers' representatives as critical review experts who are involved at various levels in the environmental balance process. This could be put into effect through a solution with funds to which the companies should contribute as well.

In the opinion of the Foundation on Work and Environment, the environmental policy discussion should also focus more on the application of environmental management tools such as environmental balances and eco-audits with the participation of the workers and their representative bodies rather than on the planned extension of environmental legislation to the production phase.

The Foundation on Work and Environment has been committed to the responsible involvement of workers and their representatives in the ecological optimisation of industrial production ever since it was first established and, upon request, will be glad to offer its support.

KSLCA Corner (Korean Society for Life Cycle Assessment)¹

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1 Technical Journal of KSLCA

The first issue of the technical journal entitled "Life Cycle Assessment" was published in Korea last September. A total of 13 papers are included in this first issue, resulting in 110 pages overall. This issue consists of one special issue paper, four papers on LCA methodology, seven case studies, and one software review paper. Two of the papers dealing with methodology are related to Life Cycle Inventory Analysis, while the other two are on Life Cycle Impact Assessment. These papers primarily came from the academic sector, while the case studies were generally from the industry. The case studies include contributions from the steel, electronics and chemical industries.

The journal is only published once a year, reflecting the amount of work currently going on in this area in Korea. However, as the quantity of research and applications grow, the number of issues is expected to increase as well.

2 Academic Conference

The 2nd annual academic conference of KSLCA was held on November 3, 1999. There were about 200 participants from academia and industry.

The conference was a forum to present LCA case studies to the Korean LCA community, and to exchange many ideas and the progress of LCA methodology. The papers presented at the conference covered

current LCA studies of both the industries and universities of Korea. The presentations were arranged into two sessions.

In Session A, research on LCA methodology and the developments of LCA software products were presented. Especially interesting were the presentations on methodology regarding applications of LCA in the Type III Environmental Declaration, calculation of normalization reference values pertaining to Korea, and LCI calculation methods for inner circulation systems. The software side revealed interesting developments in LCI data management and LCA programs for product designers.

In Session B, various LCA case studies were presented. The focus of the presentations encompassed the entire gamut of industry starting from the raw materials, energy, process and finally, the products. However, most of the papers were only able to treat the life cycle inventory phase of LCA and fell short of reaching the life cycle impact phase. Nevertheless, a life cycle impact methodology reflecting the Korean situation is currently under development and future studies should be able to cover this final aspect.

For further information about the journal and the conference, please contact:

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¹ Activities of the Korean Society for Life Cycle Assessment. Int. J. LCA Vol. 4, No. 5, p. 247 (1999)